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SUBJECT: TFUS01: ISLAMIC CONFERENCE MAKES APPEAL FOR AID TO HURRICANE KATRINA RELIEF EFFORTS

1. (U) Summary. In a sign of solidarity with the victims of Hurricane Katrina, the International Islamic Council for Dawah and Relief (an-Egyptian based pan-Islamic organization), has issued a statement on the final day of its annual conference in Kuwait, urging all its international affiliate organizations (83 worldwide) to contribute to the relief efforts currently underway in Louisiana, Alabama and Mississippi. End Summary

2. (U) On September 12-13, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Awqaf (Endowments) and Islamic Affairs co-hosted the annual gathering of the Foundation Society of the Islamic Council for Dawah and Relief, an Egyptian-based pan-Islamic organization that meets annually to address issues of concern impacting the Muslim world (Note: Ahmad Al-Hattab, a founding member of the organization, is a member of the U.S. Institute of Peace's Advisory Committee on U.S.-Muslim Relations. End Note). This year's participants issued a statement of appeal for support to victims of Hurricane Katrina, noting that "the Islamic message respects humanity as instructed by the holy Quran."

3. (U) The president of the Islamic Council, Sheikh Dr. Mohammad Syed Tantawi, a prominent Islamic scholar and head of Egypt's Al-Azhar University noted that ratifying the Katrina relief proposal was an affirmation of Islam's universal support for humanity (Note: Al-Azhar is the world's oldest university and Sunni Islam's most prestigious academic institution. End Note).

4. (U) The organization's Secretary General, Kamal Al-Shareef, confirmed that a condolence message would be conveyed on behalf of the organization to the victims of Katrina and that the Islamic Relief Agency and the Kuwaiti Committee will be responsible for collecting donations. Ambassador has received a condolence letter from the Deputy Head of the Islamic Council and Chairman of the International Islamic Charitable Organization, Yousef Al-Hajji, expressing his solidarity with the hurricane victims.

5. (U) This recent declaration by the Islamic Council comes amidst continued outpouring of support and solidarity with the victims of Hurricane Katrina from a broad spectrum of Kuwaitis, including government officials, students, businesses, charities and other public and private entities. Post has made it a priority to respond in a timely manner (within 24-48 hours), either via email or faxed response, to all correspondents.

6. (U) Earlier this week, the National Bank of Kuwait (country's largest bank), established, in coordination with the Kuwaiti Red Crescent, a bank account to receive donations for Hurricane Katrina victims. These and other gestures of support underscore the broad sentiment of solidarity prevalent among a wide spectrum of Kuwaitis and their Muslim brethren. Post will continue to update Washington on these and other Hurricane Katrina-related developments.

LEBARON